

Poetic terms

Poets use certain techniques to provide intense descriptions in poetry and fiction.

The following techniques are used by poets to play on the way words sound when they are read out loud. Think about the terms when you read, and look out for examples of each.

You can read full poems on the BBC poetry season website at:

bbc.co.uk/poetryseason



Hopkins describes aspens in his poem

*My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun*
From *Binsey Poplars* by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Here, several words that begin with the same sound are repeated. This is called **alliteration**.

*... the moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.*
From *Come Down, O Maid* by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Here, natural sounds are imitated using words. This is called **onomatopoeia**.